



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT
SAFETY COMMISSION



U.S. FIRE
ADMINISTRATION



U.S. PUBLIC
HEALTH SERVICE

INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON CIGARETTE AND LITTLE CIGAR FIRE SAFETY

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FEDERAL PANEL CALLS FOR FURTHER WORK ON CIGARETTES LESS LIKELY TO CAUSE FIRES

WASHINGTON, DC -- A federal panel has recommended that Congress authorize additional research into the commercial feasibility and health implications of cigarettes which are less likely to ignite upholstered furniture and mattresses. Should this research lead to the successful development of a less fire-prone cigarette as many as 1,500 deaths, 7,000 serious burn injuries and nearly \$500 million in property losses could be prevented in the United States each year.

Authoring these recommendations was the Interagency Committee on Cigarette and Little Cigar Safety, consisting of Mr. Terrence Scanlon, Chairman of the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission; Mr. Clyde Bragdon, the U. S. Fire Administrator and; Dr. Robert Windom, Assistant Secretary for Health of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its findings were based on a three-year technical study, completed several months ago, which concluded that "... it is technically feasible and may be commercially feasible to develop cigarettes that will have a significantly reduced propensity to ignite upholstered furniture and mattresses."

As a preface to its recommendations, the three member government panel commended the technical study for identifying four cigarette characteristics which can reduce the likelihood of ignition: (1) smaller cigarette circumference, (2) lower density tobacco, (3) less porous paper and (4) reduction of the citrate addition to cigarette paper. The panel also noted that the technical study had determined that the per puff tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide yields associated with some experimental cigarettes having such characteristics were similar to those of the best selling commercial cigarettes.

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But, according to the Interagency Committee, additional testing is needed to determine the marketability of less fire-prone cigarettes plus any increased health risks smokers might incur from such cigarettes. To accomplish this, the panel recommended that Congress establish a nine member Advisory Committee of scientists. This Advisory Committee, if approved by Congress, would guide the work of the Commerce Department's National Bureau of Standards which would undertake or contract for prototype cigarette development, consumer acceptance testing/validation, smoke chemistry analysis and the creation of a standardized ignition propensity performance test method. Once that work was completed, which is expected to take two years, the Advisory Committee would report to Congress on its findings and recommendations.

Copies of the Interagency Committee recommendations to Congress and the technical study on which they are based can be obtained by writing the Secretariat, Interagency Committee on Cigarette and Little Cigar Fire Safety, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Room 420, Washington, DC 20207 (telephone 301-492-6554). For any additional information contact the Office of Media Relations, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207 (telephone 301-492-5540).

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